

Year-in-review: CRMC revisits 2017

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The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's 46th year was one marked with recognition for CRMC staff for their efforts, scientific discovery, beginnings of projects and others that came to fruition, and continued work on the eighth Special Area Management Plan, the R.I. Shoreline Change (Beach) SAMP.

In 2017, the CRMC continued its leadership role in the preservation, restoration and monitoring of important coastal habitats. The CRMC and its project partner Save The Bay conducted native salt marsh grass plantings in two, multiple-day efforts in May and June at Ninigret salt marsh, the site of a large-scale salt marsh restoration project that was completed in January 2017.

A report from the URI Environmental Data Center (EDC) released in the summer showed eelgrass and other submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), protected by the CRMC, on the decline in most of the salt ponds and in Narragansett Bay. In 2016, the CRMC provided funding to the URI EDC and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to acquire aerial photographs of the southern coastal ponds, Narragansett Bay and Block Island, and assisted in "ground-truthing" the map results. The EDC used the resulting im-

ages to create SAV maps for the entire Rhode Island coast.

Awards were made from the CRMC's Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Trust Fund for habitat restoration projects throughout the state.

This year marked the 14th year of the program, which has distributed \$3.25 million in the form of 121 grants to state agencies, cities, towns, nonprofit and community organizations that has helped to restore more than 300 acres of coastal and estuarine habitat.

The CRMC, along with nonprofit corporation ProvPort, the City of Providence, and Save The Bay, opened more green space and public access along the waterfront with a new Urban Coastal Greenway (UCG) at the site of an old landfill located between ProvPort and Save The Bay headquarters. With the guidance of the CRMC, ProvPort transformed the landfill beginning in 2015, and then redeveloped the water-

front portion of the parcel as a UCG. Though not a continuous path, this UCG is an addition to the Johnson 7 wales University UCG, as well as the public access in front of Save The Bay. All three combined provide more than 3,000 feet of water walking paths at Fields Point.

[Learn more](#)



Volunteers plants native grasses at Ninigret



The UCG signage at the ProvPort site

Bradford Dam removal complete

Project received CRMC Habitat Trust Fund support



Work being done at Bradford dam in late 2017

This spring, the entire length of the Pawcatuck River will once again be opened to the migration of native anadromous fish species, which have not been able to swim the river's length since the 1880s.

The final piece to a list of projects spanning decades and millions of dollars is the removal of the final dam on the Pawcatuck River, a six-foot-high timber and rock structure at the Bradford mill complex.

Work to remove the dam – listed as a high flood-hazard structure – began in June and was completed in fall of 2017, with the support of the company.

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